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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU

SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

In Today's Papers

General Buyukanit Calls on President Gul

All papers report Chief of the Turkish General Staff General Yasar Buyukanit has paid a visit to the newly elected President Abdullah Gul to offer his congratulations. Yesterday's gathering was their first private meeting since the former foreign minister was elected president by parliament on August 28. In moves viewed as snubs to Gul, Buyukanit and the army commanders had not participated in any of the receptions the newly elected president has hosted.

President Gul to Tour East, Southeast Turkey

Papers report that on Tuesday, President Abdullah Gul is to travel to the eastern province of Van on his first domestic visit. Gul will move on from Van to the mainly Kurdish southeastern provinces of Hakkari, Sirnak, Siirt and Diyarbakir where he will meet with local authorities as well as NGOs and human rights activists. The President will also meet with the pro-Kurdish DTP mayors to seek ways to resolve social and economic problems in the region.

Paper: US Meeting with PKK in Northern Iraq

Vatan, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and Yeni Safak carry a Daily Telegraph story which claims "US military helicopters are reportedly used to shuttle officers to regular meetings with PKK terrorists in Kandil Mountains." The story by DT correspondent Daimen McElroy claims the US extends covert support to the PKK that attacks Iranian infrastructure and troops. A leading member of the PKK, Murat Karayilan, is quoted as saying "We told the Iranians who wanted us to attack Americans that the US and Britain were going to solve the Kurdish problem and we will be with them." Karayilan also complained that the US has done too little for the Kurds. The story also says US helicopters reportedly carry the PKK militants to support PJAK in its fight against Iran.

Petraeus-Crocker Hearings on Iraq

All papers report General David Petraeus and the US Ambassador to Baghdad, Ryan Crocker, began two days of hearings on Capitol Hill

discussing the White House's Iraq strategy. They delivered to Congress a long-awaited report on the state of the war in Iraq, in which Petraeus said 2,000 troops would be pulled back by the end of this month and as many as 30,000 would be gradually withdrawn by July 2008. Ambassador Crocker underlined the importance for Iraq of developing good ties with its neighbors, and pointed to the Iraq's neighbors' meeting to be held in October in Istanbul. Crocker also said Syria allowed terrorist infiltrations into Iraq and accused the Iranian government of its damaging role in Iraq, say papers.

Turkish - Syrian Foreign Ministers Meet to Discuss Israeli Warplane Incident

All papers report that Syrian FM Muallim arrived in Turkey following the Israeli plane violation of Syrian airspace. Muallim met with President Gul, PM Erdogan and FM Babacan. In a joint press conference with Babacan, Muallim said that they exchanged views over issues concerning security of the two countries, stability of the region, and the recent developments in Iraq. Muallim criticized Israel for the hostile act and added that Syria is aware of the fact that Turkey will never use its own territory for hostile acts against Syria. FM Babacan said that Turkey requested an explanation from Israel regarding aircraft which violated Syrian and Turkish airspace. "All countries in the region must avoid acts that may lead to tension, and these developments are unacceptable," added Babacan.

US Base at Iranian Border

Yeni Safak, Zaman and Cumhuriyet cited the internet site of the Wall Street Journal in reporting that the Pentagon is preparing to build a military base near the Iran-Iraq border to try to curtail the flow of advanced Iranian weapons to Shiite militants in Iraq.

Investigation into Missing US Weapons

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Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reported that to investigate the missing US weapons, the Pentagon, sent an 18-member delegation led by retired general Claude Kicklighter, to Iraq. Reportedly, Kicklighter will stay in Iraq until he concludes the investigation and will stop in Ankara to meet with Turkish officials before he submits his report to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

Patriarch Bartholomew I to Receive EU Human Rights Award

Sabah and Milliyet report the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I is among the candidates for the European Union's human rights award for 2007. A shortlist of three candidates will be drawn up by the European Parliament's foreign affairs and development committees September 24, and the winner will be picked by the leaders of the assembly's political groups in October.

Editorial Commentary on 9/11 Anniversary

Ali Bulac writes in the Islamist-leaning Zaman: "As time passes, we see some new information about the events of September 11 which increasingly indicates that it was not an ordinary terror incident; instead some 'deep state' elements were involved. There has been lots of speculation about who carried out the attacks, mostly pointing to Bin Laden and al-Qaeda. For some, the covert figures in America were behind it, while some argued that al-Qaeda was only used as a contractor. There will be even more speculation. The fact of the matter is that we will never be clear about who indeed carried out the attacks. Thus it is better to talk about the results instead of focusing on who did it."

Yusuf Kaplan writes in the Islamist-leaning Yeni Safak: "When President Bush described the 9/11 attacks as 'an attack against our lifestyles' he had the answer in his head: Muslim terrorists. By using the twin towers attack, the US has created an excuse to attack the Muslim world and Islam. There has been a fight against Islam since it was considered a global enemy right after the demise of communism. America did not want Muslim societies to gain independence which would be the end of exploiting natural resources as well as the end of American collaboration with dictators. Eventually, we will learn the truth behind the 9/11 attacks -- when the ongoing fight against terrorism story comes to an end one way or the other."

TV News:
NTV

Domestic News

- Foreign Minister Ali Babacan said the second expanded meeting of Iraq's neighbors will be held on October 31-November 1 in Istanbul.

- The Islamist-nationalist BBP leader Muhsin Yazicioglu said the pro-Kurdish DTP should be closed down if the party members continue calling terrorists "brothers."

- The Turkish Union of Chambers (TOBB) President Rifat Hisarciklioglu said Turkey needs annual growth of 7.5 percent to solve the problem of unemployment.

- More than 60 academic papers by 15 physicists from four Turkish universities containing apparently plagiarized work have been removed from the popular preprint server arXiv, where many physicists post their work before publication.

International News

- The northern Iraqi Kurdistan Democrat Party (KDP) website reports the Iraqi Parliament has decided to postpone a referendum with regard to the future of Kirkuk to May 2008.

- German Chancellor Merkel has expressed backing to the proposal of

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French President Sarkozy for the establishment of a committee of wise men to discuss the future of accession talks with the EU.

- Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was deported to Saudi Arabia after being arrested by police on his arrival at Islamabad yesterday.

- European Parliament has adopted a report confirming that July 22 elections in Turkey met European standards.

WILSON